



SHPO NEWS

Michigan Department of State
Candice S. Miller, Secretary of State

An Update from the State Historic Preservation Office

A WEEK AT THE TRACK

Perhaps the largest single feature at Fayette Historic Townsite is a harness racing track/baseball field constructed during the late 1870s. This area was the focus of sporting activities and continues to this day with the playing of a vintage baseball game as a part of Fayette Heritage Day festivities. The infield of the track where the present day games are played is anything but a level playing field. This irregular surface, with numerous bumps, hollows and projecting rocks, is a real threat to the safety of those playing the games. The Department of Natural Resource (DNR) desires to smooth out the area where the game is played. Excavations by the Office of the State Archaeologist during the week of July 19 revealed that the bumps and hollows directly correlated with the closeness of bedrock to the surface and the presence of solution cracks in the bedrock. Careful observation of the soil profile in a 2.5 x 50 foot long trench showed that relatively little effort had been expended in constructing the track. The builders had pulled stumps, dragged the track surface and picked up loose rock. There was no evidence of fill or a

prepared racing surface. In some places bedrock lay only three inches below the ground surface. On a wet track, the narrow wheels of a sulky would have easily cut through the thin covering of soil and bounced along on the irregular surface of the bedrock. We believe this to be the first archaeological excavation ever undertaken at a nineteenth-century track. Our work assured that DNR's proposed activities will have little effect on the archaeological remains of the track while showing that the builders had to overcome serious obstacles such as active geological features like solution cracks.



—John R. Halsey,
State Archaeologist

Dean Anderson and Robert Cook of the Office of the State Archaeologist excavate the race track at the Fayette Historic Town Site.

COMPANY TOWN TO BE NOMINATED TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER

A National Register of Historic Places nomination has been completed for the village of Gwinn, a company town twenty miles south of Marquette that was established in 1906-07 by the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company to house workers in the company's mines in the Swanzy mining district. Cleveland-Cliffs President William G. Mather envisioned a model company town as a means of attracting dependable workers to this remote area and retained the nationally prominent landscape architect Warren H. Manning of Boston to plan the new community. Gwinn was the largest of Manning's numerous projects in the Lake Superior region and one of the most important projects in his career as a

landscape architect. The "Gwinn Model Town Historic District" nomination includes most of the village. The SHPO has long recognized the significance of Gwinn and recently contracted with Professor Arnold R. Alanen of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Madison landscape architect and consultant Barbara Wyatt to complete the national register nomination. The State Historic Preservation Review Board will consider the Gwinn district nomination at its next meeting, to be held on January 14, 2000.

—Robert O. Christensen, National Register Coordinator

TIME FOR TEA-21

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has issued application materials for its fiscal year 2001 Enhancement Program. Authorized by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the program allocates ten percent of MDOT's share of federal Surface Transportation Funds (U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration) for transportation enhancement activities such as historic preservation, pedestrian and bicyclist facilities and programs, scenic or historic highway programs, landscaping and scenic beautification, archaeological planning and research, and establishment of transportation museums. The fiscal year 2001 budget for MDOT's Enhancement Program is \$20 million.

Applicants for funding must be Act 51 recipient governmental units (e.g. MDOT, county road commissions, city and village road agencies), public transit agencies, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, or metropolitan or regional planning organizations. Non-Act 51 governmental units (e.g. townships) or others may sponsor an enhancement project but they must

work with and get the approval of the relevant transportation agency. To be eligible for Enhancement Program funds, projects must meet the program criteria and applicants are required to provide at least a 20 percent match.

MDOT's Enhancement Program provides a potentially large pool of funding for historic preservation projects. Eligible projects for TEA-21 funds include restoration of historic bridges, rehabilitation of historic railroad depots, and transportation museums. Historic lighthouses and other types of historic structures with transportation-related museums may be eligible for funding.

Applications for fiscal year 2001 projects are due December 6, 1999. For more information, consult MDOT's website at www.mdot.state.mi.us or contact Paul McAllister, MDOT Enhancement Program Manager, at (517) 335-2622 or Bryan Armstrong, MDOT Enhancement Program Coordinator, at (517) 335-2636.

—Martha MacFarlane
Environmental Review Coordinator

For more information on any SHPO News item, contact the SHPO by phone at 517/373-1630, by e-mail at preservation@sosmail.state.mi.us, or visit our web site at www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve/preserve.html.

PRESERVING MICHIGAN'S AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY

The establishment of the Automobile National Heritage Area in 1998 has led to an increased interest in preserving automobile related sites across the state. The SHPO has been involved with a number of auto heritage preservation projects this year.

Plans to construct a postal distribution facility in Shelby Township led to the rediscovery and evaluation of the Packard Motor Car Company Proving Grounds. Designed by Albert Kahn in 1927, the 640-acre site consists of a 2.5 mile test track, a system of test roadways, and a Tudor Revival gate lodge and repair garage. Once the major test facility for Packard automobiles, the site has been owned by Ford Motor Company since 1961. Based on historic documentation provided by the Shelby Township Historical Committee, the SHPO was able to determine the site eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The postal service eventually identified an alternate site within the township for its facility.

The city of Kingsford, contacted the SHPO for help in preserving the stacks of the Kingsford Ford Plant designed by Albert Kahn and built c.1919. In an experiment to completely control the manufacturing process, Ford purchased iron mines, timber stands, and a rail line in the Upper Peninsula and built processing plants and a factory in the Kingsford/Iron Mountain area. Much of the Kingsford Plant still exists including three glass and steel manufacturing structures, a water tower, and warehouses. A neighborhood of worker housing, which includes a hospital, club house, park, and company store, and a dam built by Ford also exist in the community. The SHPO encouraged city officials to survey Ford related sites in the area, to pursue a national register nomination for the Ford factory site, and to partner with other U.P. communities to develop a regional heritage tourism plan for auto-related resources.

General Motors (GM) recently announced its commitment to invest in its modernistic Technical Center, designed by Eero and Eliel Saarinen in the 1940-1950s, so that it may continue to serve as the corporation's major design hub. To achieve this goal, additional office and research space will be created within the campus while extensive restoration work will be undertaken on the historic buildings. GM's interest in the federal historic preservation tax incentives led to the development of a history of the facility, a significance evaluation of each building on the campus, and a summary of the elements and themes common to the original design in order to determine its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Recognizing the significance of the Technical Center campus in American architectural history, GM, in consultation with the SHPO and the National Park Service, determined that its need for expansion could be balanced with the desire to protect and retain the character of the campus.

—Amy Arnold
Historic Preservation Planner

SITES ONLINE NOW LIVE!

Remember to check out the SHPO's new searchable database
MICHIGAN'S HISTORIC SITES ONLINE
at www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve/preserve.html

TAX CREDIT APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE!!!

You supported the Network when it was lobbying the legislature!

You cheered when Governor Engler signed the bill!

NOW it's time to take advantage of the payoff and apply for Michigan State Tax Credits for the rehabilitation of your historic residence or business property.

To request application materials for the Michigan Tax Credit program as well as the Federal Investment Tax Credit Program, e-mail the SHPO at preservation@sosmail.state.mi.us or telephone 517/373-1630.

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MDOT/SHPO PARTNERSHIP EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The Winter 1998 issue of the SHPO News reported that the SHPO and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) developed strategies to streamline and improve our Section 106 compliance processes and procedures for MDOT's federal-aid trunkline highway projects ("Inter-Agency Agreement Improves Process"). Our ongoing efforts have been strengthened by a 1998 programmatic agreement between our agencies, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In the past year, the SHPO/MDOT team has reduced SHPO time spent reviewing these projects by 99 percent, cut the cycle time for project reviews by almost one-third, and has reduced associated costs by approximately 50 percent. In addition, we have obtained funding for cultural resource survey and inventory, streamlined the consultant selection process, and have developed a communication and outreach plan, including a new website (under construction) dedicated to cultural resources affected by MDOT projects. To access the website, go to www.mdot.state.mi.us.

On October 4, 1999, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the nation's chief agency for establishing highway planning, construction and design guidelines, awarded the MDOT/SHPO team with an Exemplary Partner Award, the highest award in the annual AASHTO Team Recognition Program. A total of eighty-four teams entered the annual competition and only fifteen of those teams earned Exemplary Partner status. We are delighted with the current success of this program and look forward to an equally successful future.

—Martha MacFarlane
Environmental Review Coordinator